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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the political responsiblity of the library administrator, particularly in regard to government funding of public libraries and state library agencies. The history of library development in the United States is outlined, revealing the original political base of the library movement and indicating the necessity for political support if the structure is to remain intact. The philosophy and political involvement of individuals who took part in the establishment and growth of libraries is reviewed with mention of the political activities of Benjamin Franklin, Edward Everett, Edwin Hatfield Anderson, and other persons. Further sections describe the legal instruments which serve as the basis for library establishment, the control mechanisms of the various types of library boards, and the funding of public, school, university, and special libraries at the local, state, and federal levels. The role of the American Library Association (ALA) is also examined with regard to its political awareness, involvement, and effectiveness. It is concluded that political implications are evidenced in every area of librarianship and that the library administrator must be politically involved, particularly in the area of library funding. A 16-item bibliography and a 10-item selected bibliography are provided. (ESR)

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The Changing Role of Librarian

By

Thompson R. Cummins

IR 052 469

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Introduction

It is the purpose of this paper to explore the political responsibility of the library administrator. An outline of the history of library development, the political structure of libraries, and a summary of current issues requiring political involvement will provide justification for the emphasis on political responsibility. The paper will deal primarily with public libraries and state library agencies, although the role of school (elementary and secondary), university and special libraries will be examined in the areas of funding and cooperation.

An examination of the outline of the library movement in the United States reveals a political base, and indicates the necessity for political support if the structure is to remain intact. The history of libraries includes the legal basis for their development, the types of structures developed and an investigation of the philosophy and involvement of individuals contributing to the establishment and growth of libraries.

Although this paper is limited to political implications regarding funding, other current areas of concern which invite, even demand, political involvement are the interpretation of intellectual freedom concepts, the implementation of the National Program for Library and Information Science, the further interpretation of the Copyright Law of 1976 and the development of the National Periodicals Center. The role of the American Library Association will be examined regarding its political

awareness, involvement and effectiveness. The usefulness of this review of history and development, is to provide a basis for the determination of the implications for librarianship. Primarily affected areas are library education and management. A review of the curriculum and of the parameters of library education is a viable possibility. The implications for management involve the styles of management indicated in a politically oriented organization, and management as a part of the curriculum within the framework of library education.

History

The history of library development can be traced from the social library, founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731 (The Philadelphia Library Company) to the nationwide network concept outlined in the National Program for Library and Information Service in 1975.[1] The trend progresses from the individual effort to the local; to the county, regional and state, including multi-type, federated and division libraries; to nationwide networks. The trend in Library development parallels the development of the political structure and climate in the United States. Historically, the library system is an integral part of the political system, and as such, demands the involvement of representatives of the library establishment.

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[1]National Commission Libraries and Information Science, toward a National Program for Library and Information Services: Goals for Action (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 49-60 .

Early libraries were the social libraries which consisted of proprietary and subscription organizations.[2] The first proprietary library established by Benjamin Franklin (The Library Company of Philadelphia) was an outgrowth of the Junto Discussion meetings. Members of the discussion group contributed their books, allowing each member use of them, although title to all was retained by the group. The basis of this type of organization was the joint stock principle.

Joeckel describes the other type of social library, the subscription library, which included subordinate types of mercantile and apprentice or mechanic's libraries, such as the Boston Mercantile and the Mechanic's Apprentice Library, both founded in 1820. The subscription library was supported by fees paid by those who wished to use its services, primarily young clerks and young men of the artisan class.[3] The libraries were "public in the English sense of being available for use by those who subscribed to certain financial requirements applying equally to all users."[4]

The proprietary library appealed to the wealthier patron. Of the Social Library of Salem, Massachusetts formed in 1760, it has been said that the "list of members was a veritable social register of Salem."[5]

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[2]Carleton Bruns Joechel, The Government of the American Public Library (Chicago: The University of Chicago Library, 1935), p. 2.

[3]Ibid., p. 3.

[4]Ibid., p. 2.

[5]Harriet J. Topley, Salem Imprints, 1768-1825: A History of the First Fifty Years of Printing in Salem, Massachusetts . . . (Salem: Essex Institute, 1927), p. 245, quoted in Jesse H. Shern, Foundations of the Public Library (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 59.

Early social libraries were the Boston Athenaeum, the New York Society Library and the Library Company of Philadelphia, mentioned earlier.

The establishment of the social libraries in the 18th and 19th century (1731-1850) outlined a pattern for the future of: (1) independent libraries, (2) strong management by boards of private citizens, and (3) recognition of library services as an important and useful function.

Jesse H. Shera in Foundations of the Public Library quotes William F. Poole's definition of a "public library" as an institution which "is established by state laws, is supported by local taxation of voluntary gifts, is managed as a public trust, and every citizen of the city or town which maintains it has an equal share in its privileges of reference and circulation."[6] The basis for tax support for public libraries is their designation as educational institutions. The state has been determined to be financially responsible for the education of its citizens, and the public library as an educational institution is eligible for financial support from the state government.[7]

In Petersborough, New Hampshire, in 1833, the first free circulating library was organized and derived its financial support from a share of the state fund obtained from a tax fund designated for "schools" or "other purposes of education."[8]

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[6]Public Libraries in the United States: 1876 Report (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876), cited by Shera, p. 157.

[7]Joeckel, pp. 44, 45.

[8]Ibid., p. 15.

As a result of what was really the first state law providing for tax-supported free library service passed in 1835 in New York State, school-district public libraries were "established by state laws, supported by public funds and free to all citizens." The libraries were "attached to the school district as a governmental unit but intended to serve both adults and children."[9]

The year 1850 marked the beginning of an era of public library growth. Citizens whose specialties were libraries were Charles Jewett, Edward Everett, Justin Winsor and William Frederick Poole. In the period between 1850 and 1890, 257 public libraries were established.

This was a period of municipal graft and corruption.

> In a day when the spoils system ruled . . . the personnel of libraries seems to have been little affected . . . The reputations of such early library leaders as Jewett, Winsor, Poole, Crunden and others are outstanding in comparison with the rather common average of mediocrity and sheer inefficiency in municipal service. Possibly the libraries were financially too poor and their salaries too low to attract the interest of the spoilsmen, . . . The librarian's characteristic fear of politics, born in this unsavory period of municipal history, has had a powerful influence in determining his point of view regarding the governmental organization of the public library. 10

The 'home rule' movement, which began in Missouri in 1875 and allowed city-charter precedence over state library laws was the basis for the establishment of libraries by independent municipal charter.[11]

In the period between 1890 and 1917, Andrew Carnegie contributed $41 million for the construction of 1,679 public library buildings in

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[9] Ibid., p. 8.

[10] Ibid., pp. 23, 24.

[11] Ibid., p. 60.

1,412 communities in the United States. He also donated $4,283,000 toward the construction of 108 academic library buildings.[12]

Edwin Hatfield Anderson (1861-1947), the first librarian of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, was aware of the political implications of the library profession. His career was associated with that of Andrew Carnegie, and he influenced Carnegie to donate financial support to the library in Pittsburgh.

> As a result of Anderson's urging, Andrew Carnegie donated funds to buy such materials, which in 1902 formed the basis for a Department of Technology . . .; in 1899, his arguments for expansion convinced Carnegie to supply the money for a new wing. 13
> He knew how to get on with the trustees and to earn the confidence of a man like Carnegie. 14

The establishment of a state library commission was a step toward centralization of authority in the state government. In 1890, the General Court of Massachusetts organized a state library agency through the creation of a State Board of Library Commissions.[15] The purpose of the Commission was to extend assistance to public libraries. Functions of state library agencies are to:

1) serve as a regular library for state government employees; 2)

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[12]Bohdan S. Wynar, Dictionary of American Library Biography (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1978), p. 69.

[13]Ibid., pp. 7, 8.

[14]Ibid., p. 4.

[15]Martha Conner, Outline of the History of the Development of the American Public Library(Chicago: American Library Association, 1931), p. 93.

serve as a statewide resource center for interlibrary loan and reference; and 3) to provide a focal point within the state for long-range, statewide library planning and development. 16

The unit beyond the local library was the county library. National and state library associations were supportive of this type of unit, the primary emphasis of which was service to rural areas. Classifications of these units are as follows:

A. Government types of county libraries.
   1. Libraries which are a part of the county government.
   2. Libraries which are a part of both the city and the county government.
   3. Municipal libraries or libraries of other types which serve the county by contract.
B. Geographical types of county libraries.
   1. Libraries which serve the entire area of the county.
   2. Libraries which serve only a part of the area of the county, usually omitting the larger cities. 17

As an indication of the trend toward larger units, Carleton Joeckel in A National Plan for Public Library Service, published by the American Library Association in 1948, saw the role of the state as a sponsor of the "development of an efficient and integrated system of public libraries"[18] and advocated that "public library service in the United States should be provided by approximately 1,200 effective library units."[19] The suggested patterns of units were:

1) independent municipal libraries in cities of over 25,000 population, 2) county libraries serving the entire area of large

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[16] U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences, p. 19.

[17] Joeckel, p. 264.

[18] Carleton B. Joeckel and Amy Winslow, A National Plan for Public Library Service (Chicago: The American Library Association, 1948), p. 153.

[19] Ibid., p. 152.

counties, 3) county libraries serving parts of large counties, 4) regional or multicounty libraries comprising two or more counties, 5) federated groups of cooperating libraries and 6) state library service. 20

The public library standards of 1956 published by the American Library Association supported the concept of public library systems, incorporating public, school and academic libraries.[21]

Toward a National Program for Library and Information Services: Goals for Action published by the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science in 1975 defined the nationwide network concept as follows:

> A nationwide network of libraries and information centers means an integrated system encompassing state networks, multistate networks, and specialized networks in the public and private sectors. The Federal Government would force no library or information service to join the network, but it would provide technical inducements and funding incentives to state governments and the private sector to strengthen their ability to affiliate. 22

A survey of library development for the past 150 years indicates that public libraries were the concern of local government for the first fifty years, that the state began to assume responsibility during the second fifty years and that the latter fifty year period is one in which the federal government is joining in partnership with state and local government to provide library service.

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[20] Ibid., pp. 152, 153.

[21] G. Flint Purdy, "Interrelations Among Public, School and Academic Libraries," Library Quarterly 39 (January 1969): 53.

[22] U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, p. 49.

Legal Basis for Library Government

The legal instruments that provides the basis for library organization are: (1) general state library law, (2) special library law, (3) school code or other state law, (4) city charter--home-rule or special law, (5) city ordinance, (6) special library charter, or (7) a combination of several methods.[23]

Only one state (Michigan in 1835) made a provision in the state constitution for support of a library.

> The successive constitutions of this state, beginning with the first (1835) have all contained a short section in the article on education requiring the legislature to provide for the establishment of at least one library in each township (and later, "city") and providing for their support by the proceeds of the penal fine. [24]

There are three types of general state library laws: (1) "long" laws, (2) "short" laws, and (3) laws which contain no details. The "long" library laws are detailed and complete, particularly with reference to the powers and duties of the governing board of the library.[25] The leading example of this type of law is the Illinois law passed in 1872. "Short" library laws "contain a certain amount of detail but are not specific about the powers of the library board."[26]

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[23] Joeckel, p. 73.

[24] Michigan, Constitution (1908), art. 11, sec. 14. See for history: J.E.M. Vander Ploeg, "Penal Fines as Applied to the Support of Libraries in Michigan" (M.A.L.S. thesis, University of Illinois, 1929), cited by Joeckel, p. 54.

[25] Joeckel, p. 59.

[26] Ibid.

New Hampshire (1849) and Massachusetts are states with this type of law. Typical of the laws which contain no details is the law in Texas, in which "the law merely permits cities to establish libraries and leaves details entirely to the local authorities."[27]

Libraries do not always fall into any one category, but may have a partial basis in more than one area.

> Uniformity has been broken down by . . . special legislation, by the home-rule charter movement, by the lack of detail in a number of state library laws, and, . . . by the optional forms of organization in the more detailed state laws.[28]

Units of Control

There are three general types of library boards: (1) corporation or association, (2) school-district, and (3) municipal.

Boards of corporation libraries, chosen from among the stockholders, and boards of association libraries chosen by the association as representatives, are powerful and independent.

> Even the obvious power of the purse wielded by the municipality does not affect a number of them, for they have sufficient endowments to provide for all their needs or for a large part of them.[29]

The board membership is usually self-chosen or elected by the association, although in some cases, "there are boards of joint membership made up more or less equally of corporate members and municipal representatives."[30] Membership on a corporation or

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., p.74

[29] Ibid., p.89.

[30] Ibid., p.91.

association library board is considered a "mark of distinction."[31] "Eighteen of the twenty-one trustees of the New York Public Library are to be found in Who's Who, and not one of them fails to mention the fact that he is a trustee of the Library."[32] The boards are usually self-perpetuating, as the members are reappointed indefinitely, and they appoint their successors.

The position of the library staff in relation to this type of board reflects the "stability, continuity and independence"[33] of the board.

Financial administration involves "property rights," and "in about three-fourths of the cities title to the library property is vested in the corporation or in the board which controls it."[34] In other cases, the city, or the city and the corporation, maintain the title, and in many cases a definite contract exists between the two entities.

Income is derived from public and private sources. Usually a direct appropriation is allotted from the general funds of the city, and the library has autonomy as to distribution.[35]

School-district library boards may be appointed by boards of education or the libraries may be under the direct control of the boards of education.

From the point of view of library service to the general public, the best results seem to have been attained when the mixture of

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[31] Ibid., p.92.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., p.95

[34] Ibid., p.96.

[35] Ibid., pp. 99, 100.

> schools and libraries is least complete; . . . when the library, though remaining legally a part of the school district, is most nearly independent through administration by its own board. 36

Municipal libraries without boards may be controlled according to the municipal government structure. This may be in the form of a mayor-council, city manager, city council or city commission.

> The management of the library is placed in the hands of a single responsible executive, the librarian, who takes his regular place in the administrative hierarchy . . . . Responsibility for the administration of the library is definitely his, although the responsibility for its support and general success must necessarily be shared to a large extent by his administrative and legislative superiors. . . . the library has become in a very strict sense a "department" or "bureau" in the city government. It takes its place alongside every other department and is administered according to the same general plan. 37

The most common type of control is the board of the municipal library. Members may be elected or appointed. The number of members constituting a board varies from three to twenty-five. The term of office is arranged so as to have "(1) a reasonably long term of office and (2) overlapping expiration dates."[38] This results in permanent and slowly changing board membership. The normal term of office is from three to five years.

In a summary of board powers, Joeckel in The Government of the American Public Library states two general principles:

> (1) the determination of the amount of public funds to be allotted to library service should be made by higher authority than the library board . . . and (2) incorporation of the municipal library board and the vesting of title to library property in the board

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[36] Ibid., pp. 148, 149.

[37] Ibid., p. 152.

[38] Ibid., p. 190.

are really not vital points.[39]

Financial powers and duties fo the board include:

1. To control and make all expenditures from library funds.
2. To receive gifts and administer trusts.
3. To purchase library sites and to erect buildings.
4. To rent property for library use.
5. To purchase books, periodicals, maps, and other library materials.
6. To purchase supplies and equipment.

Administrative powers and duties:

1. To adopt by-laws for the conduct of its own business and to choose its own officers.
2. To make rules and regulations for the use of the library.
3. To have general control of the library staff . . .
4. To have general supervision and custody of all property used for library purposes.
5. To borrow books from and lend books to other libraries.
6. To make annual reports to the municipal government and to the state library extension agency. 40

Funding

The legal instruments which serve as the basis for library establishment and the control mechanisms of the various types of library boards are interrelated with funding, the third and most basic in the foundation of library development. It is in this crucial area that the library administrator has an opportunity to exert a positive influence on the local, state and federal levels.

The library administrator's responsibility in the area of local funding is emphasized by Ann E. Prentice in Public Library Finance:

> The major point is that local support of the public library is a local consideration, related to the community's ability to pay, to its attitude toward library service, and to the leadership role

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[39] Ibid., p. 232.

[40] Ibid., pp. 232, 233.

> taken on behalf of library service by the librarians and leaders in the community. 41

Lillian Bradshaw, Librarian of the Dallas Public Library, in defense of a funding system by which the library draws it operating moneys from the city's general fund, emphasized the "administrative responsibility to develop with staff the philosophy that money (new and old) must be 'earned' each year."[42]

Carlton C. Rochelle who directed the Atlanta Public Library from 1968 to 1976, tells of the successful drive for the passage of a $19 million library bond in Atlanta when the other bonds for parks, streets, and sewers were defeated. A well planned campaign utilizing an advertising firm and the Friends of the Library contributed to this success. The politically oriented philosophy of the administrator is revealed in the statement:

> Library fund raising is not for the faint of heart--especially today! If you have the courage of your convictions, are surefooted, possess a political sense, and call the shots yourself, there is no reason why you can't do it. 43

In a report of case studies of three defeated bond issue referendums in Champaign, Quincy and Peoria, Illinois by Ruth G. Lindahl and William S. Berner, an attempt was made to study voting behavior on public library bond issue referendums. It was determined that the campaigns should have had longer-range planning, and that

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[41] Ann E. Prentice, Public Library Finance (Chicago: American Library Association, 1977), p. 34.

[42] Lillian Moore Brodshaw, "Public Library Funding through a Local Government Unit," PLA Newsletter 16 (Fall 1977):10.

[43] Carlton Rochelle, "Secrets of Successful $ Seekers. Call the Shots Yourself," American Libraries 8 (1977):574, 575.

public relations methods should have been utilized by a more politically involved library establishment.

> Although the library is normally removed from the mainstream of community politics, when it seeks added financial support the library becomes more clearly a part of local government. . . . it would appear that knowledge of local politics, whether provided by the bond or by others, is essential in planning and conducting successful financial campaigns. 44

Political involvement on the state level is suggested in the current literature. Frances H. Pletz, executive secretary of the Michigan Library Association suggests the secret of legislature action is "getting librarians to agree on bills (and that's never 100%) and in finding a legislator with the skill and clout to steer bills along the rough road to passage."[45]

Joyce M. Reid, Legislative Chairperson, Connecticut Library Association, outlines a plan of action incorporating letters, telephone calls and visits to legislators. Guidelines for this action are included in a packet sent to state library association members.[46] Involvement of the legislators has been encouraged by Appreciation Days or Legislative Days, which are occasions for the librarian to lobby for proper support.

The personnel of libraries which are under civil service must be aware of the limitations imposed by the Hatch Act, which prohibits the "use of official authority or influencing for the purpose of interfering with an election or affecting the result thereof, . . .

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[44]Guy Garrison, Studies in Public Library Government, Organization and Support (Washington, D.C.: HEW, 1969).

[45]Frances H. Pletz, "Stroke the Legislators," American Libraries 8 (1977):575.

[46]Joyce M. Reid, "Overdue Notice," Connecticut Libraries 20 (1978):7.

and taking any active part in political management or in political campaigns."[47]

It is reported in a Study of State Library Legislation by Annie Mary Hartsfield, Douglas St. Angelo and Harold Goldstein that questions included on a questionnaire sent to state library staff regarding their political activities were considered inappropriate because of the restrictions placed on government employees by the Hatch Act.[48]

The period of substantive Federal involvement in libraries began in 1956 with the funding stipulated in the Library Services Act which authorized $7,500,000 for each five years. The target of this appropriation was rural areas. In 1958-1959, President Eisenhower proposed $3 million for Library Services Act; Congress voted $5 million. In 1960, LSA was extended to 1966; the president proposed $6.6 million for LSA and Congress voted $7.4 million. In 1964, the Library Services Act was broadened to become the Library Services and Construction Act to include construction as well as services and urban as well as rural areas. The Higher Education Facilities Act authorized grants and loans for construction of academic libraries.[49]

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[47]"Collective Bargaining and Politics in Public Employment," UCLA Law Review 19 (August 1972):968-969, cited by Felix A. Nigro and Lloyd G. Nigro, The New Public Personnel Administration (Itasca, Ill.: F.E. Peacock, 1976), p. 295.

[48]Annie Mary Hartsfield, Douglas St. Angelo and Harold Goldstein, Study of State Library Legislation (Washington, D.C.: HEW, 1970), p. 51.

[49]Allen Kent and Harold Laviour, eds., Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science, vol. 15 (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1975), pp. 352-354.

In 1966, LSCA was amended and extended until 1976.

> . . . this Federal legislation has had a positive influence on the statewide development of public libraries. Although the amount of Federal aid has been small in relation to total library expenditures, the program has encouraged the states to accept and implement increased responsibility for support of public libraries.[50]

Alex Ladenson, in an article in PLA Newsletter, "Is Federal Aid to Public Libraries a Sound National Policy?" calls attention to the fact that the property tax, the greatest item in public library support, is a regressive tax which lacks elasticity, unlike the income or sales tax which increase with inflation. In his argument for federal aid, he states:

> It should be emphasized that there is nothing in law, logic or public policy that requires public libraries to be financed solely through local taxation. If the public library is to survive as an effective instrument for the dissemination of knowledge and information, a balanced intergovernmental funding pattern, in which the local, state and federal governments participate, is imperative. 51

Eileen D. Cooke in "The Role of the ALA and Other Library Associations in the Promotion of Library Legislation" outlined recommended techniques for achieving legislative effectiveness. The American Library Association has an official, current legislative policy, and is a source of information on libraries and information science for those formulating or implementing federal legislation. It is suggested that organizations are more effective than individuals,

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[50]National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Federal Funding of Public Libraries (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976), pp. 35, 36.

[51]Alex Lodenson, "Is Federal Aid to Public Libraries a Sound National Policy?" PLA Newsletter 16 (Fall 1977):12.

that coalitions of organizations are a useful technique, and that timing is of the essence in the legislative process. Cooke related the role of ALA in influencing public opinion to such an extent that Congress rejected President Nixon's zero budget proposal for libraries in 1974. She emphasized the role of the American Library Trustee Association in providing the impetus for the White House Conference. With the austerity of the 1980's comes an even greater demand for political know-how.[52]

This paper has focused on library history and development and its relation to funding on the local, state and federal levels. The role of the library administrator has been implied, if not stated, specifically in each of these sections.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the library administrator has no choice regarding political involvement. Political implications are evidenced in every area of librarianship. If the library is to survive, the administrator must be politically astute, politically involved and politically enthusiastic. The history of the development of libraries reveals that without the political impetus provided by Benjamin Franklin, Edward Everett and Edwin Hatfield Anderson, there would be no libraries today. These statesmen were not only concerned with their access to materials; they were dedicated to making that material available to their fellow-citizens. Libraries are a part of the political framework of this country. It is from libraries that

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[52]Eileen D. Cooke, "The Role of ALA and Other Library Associations in the Promotion of Library Legislation," Library Trends 24 (July 1975): 137-151.

the ideas and ideals of a democracy are perpetuated.

Librarianship is a profession of involvement, not of isolation. Library education must reflect that philosophy, and in the practical sense, must educate for political involvement. Courses in public administration, political science, budgeting, public relations, marketing and communication must be incorporated into the curriculum.

Political involvement affects the area of management as it requires the administrator to have the cooperation and support of a politically aware staff. Clearly defined goals, open lines of lateral and vertical communication and true participation are indicated as the management style for the politically astute library director and educator.

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